DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 057 702 FL 002 825

AUTHOR Mohrman, Alice Arlene
TITLE "Los Primeros Pasos:" Phonics and Beginning Reading-Writing Instruction.
PUB DATE Dec 71
NOTE 5p.; Speech presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Association of Teachers of Spanish and Portuguese, Chicago, Illinois, December 28-30, 1971

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.65 HC-$3.29
DESCRIPTORS Audiolingual Skills; Basi C Skills; Elementary Schools; *Fles; *Language Instruction; Language Skills; Methods; Modern Languages; *Phonics; *Reading Instruction; Reading Skills; *Writing Skills

ABSTRACT

Methods of developing confidence in FLES students who are beginning to read and to write are examined in this article. Phonics instruction is seen as the key to achieving a successful transition from the audiolingual skills of listening and speaking to those of reading and writing. Sample exercises illustrate general procedures recommended for teaching phonic skills. (RL)

ED057702

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION
THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL OFFICE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

LOS PRIMEROS PASOS: PHONICS AND BEGINNING READING-WRITING INSTRUCTION

-Alice Arlene Mohrman

The transition from audio-lingual skills to development of all four language skills is important to consider as part of quality FLES education. How is this transition to be made?

Just as we expect the six year old child to spend several years learning to read and write his native language, so must the Spanish student be taught to recognize the sound-letter correspondences of Spanish, then to read and write them.

Imagine a pupil recently completing audio-lingual instruction in Spanish. Ask him to read the following sentence aloud and you might hear "Mi perro se llama Duque" pronounced "My pearo see lama duck you". Ask him to read the same sentence after completing phonics study and he would correctly read Mi perro se llama Duque. His phonics instruction has prepared him to relate the Spanish writing system to the Spanish sound he knows audio-lingually.

Without phonics training, the English speaking pupil presumes that letters represent the same sounds in both Spanish and English. Thus, when he reads "My pearo see lama Duck you", he demonstrates his knowledge of the English sound-letter relationships. Without specific phonics training he will continue to apply English pronunciation to the Spanish he sees. This mispronunciation will result in incomprehension for the audio-lingually trained pupil.

How does the teacher begin phonics instruction? He first presents those Spanish sound-letter correspondences that are most difficult for the English speaking pupils: Spanish letters that interfere with English (vowels, H and V) and Spanish sounds that are nonexistant in English (r, rr, ll, ñ). He guides the pupil in the development of the following skills:

1. Recognition of the letters of the alphabet in oral and written forms
2. Knowledge of the sound-letter correspondence of each letter, and
3. Ability to read with correct accent and write with correct spelling syllables, then words and phrases.

The general procedure for teaching phonics skills is:

1. Give simple explanation of pronunciation of one letter at a time
2. Involve the pupil in using the sound. For example, have him read aloud and spell illustrative words, circling the letter or combination of letters being studied.
3. The pupil can engage in many reinforcing written exercises. For example:
   a. Dictation: Of the alphabet, then syllables like ba, go or me, and finally simple words which contain the letter being studied.
   b. Fill in the blank exercises: These work best when contrasting two or more sounds (vowels, n and ñ, r and rr). For example, the pupil sees "c__sa" on his paper, hears the word casa pronounced, and fills in the missing vowel.
   c. Discrimination exercises: These work best when contrasting two or more sounds. The pupil sees two words on his paper, then underlines and/or copies the word he hears (este, esta).

FL002825

d. Copy exercises: Although simple, these exercises can make the pupil think. They also point out and reinforce the sound being studied. For example, the pupil may read El niño se baña por la mañana, then copy all words containing ñ. He may read a word list, then copy the word which the teacher pronounces:

hambre	
hoy	hambre
hombre	
ahora	hoy

or copy the word next to its picture:

la rosa	
el río	la cara
la pera	
la cara	el río

or copy the appropriate word next to a word clue:

parque	
quince	Siete y ocho quince
queso	
Paquita	Una comida amarailla queso .

4. Rhymes, tongue twisters and poems are particularly useful in phonics instruction, both as a fun activity and as reinforcement of the sound being studied. For example, PUSE MIS ZAPATOS is marvelous for reinforcing the pronunciation of s, c and z.

PUSE MIS ZAPATOS

Puse mis zapatos en el piso
Mis zapatos, mis zapatos
Mis zapatos zapatitos
Zapatito, Zapatón.

Trabalenguas like PACO PECO, besides being part of the Spanish culture, can be used to reinforce different sounds; each vowel, a review of all vowels, and the consonant p.

PACO PECO

Paco Peco, chico rico
Insultaba como un loco
a su tío Federico
y éste dijo -Poco a poco,
Paco Peco, poco pico.

A typical phonics lesson consists of a variety of activities, both written and oral. For example, a lesson on the vowel i would begin with a simple oral explanation of the pronunciation. This would be followed by choral reading of a rhyme previously learned audio-lingually; individuals underline each i on the blackboard, overhead projector, or on their papers. The teacher pronounces a series of words and pupils raise their hands whenever they hear a word containing the letter i, then sentences containing illustrative words. The lesson could end with a quick game of tic-tac-toe (pupil must pronounce and spell an i word correctly to get an "X" or "O" for his team) or "Hangman", using an i word and then singing the I verse of Yo te daré. The variety of activities should help all pupils learn the sound-letter correspondence.

This is the basic "Why, What and How" of Spanish instruction. The "And how!" comes when the young pupil finishing phonics can successfully read the name of this Mexican village on his own: Parangaricutirumícuaro-Zitácuaro.

With adequate phonics training behind him, the young pupil will not find beginning reading a major hurdle. His progress will be still easier if the teacher keeps a few basic points in mind.

1. The pupil should read nothing that he has not mastered audio-lingually. If reading material contains any new vocabulary or structure, they should be well taught audio-lingually before reading begins.

2. Although silent reading is an ultimate goal, reading at the beginning stage should be primarily oral. The teacher should always model pronunciation as the pupils read along silently. Only after choral repetition should individuals read alone.

   After audio-lingual training, some pupils tend to look at the teacher rather than at the reading selection. To avoid this, the teacher may employ the following "sneaky trick". He reads aloud, stopping occasionally to have the class or an individual read the next word. Since this exercise distorts normal intonation, it should not be overdone -- used occasionally it succeeds in drawing attention to the printed word.

3. It is important to teach the pupil to read for comprehension. It is very easy for the pupil to read with beautiful pronunciation without the faintest idea of the meaning. A number of techniques can be used to insure comprehension:

   a. Don't be afraid to translate into English! Unless a Spanish word or phrase can be very simply explained in Spanish or by gesture, the fastest and easiest means is simple translation followed by an immediate return to Spanish.

   b. Basic comprehension questions like, "What problem did the boys have?" or "What happened to Pablo in school?" help the teacher evaluate comprehension.

   c. Basic questions in Spanish are very useful. At the beginning, the pupils can give answers by reading a sentence from the story as in the following example. (See transparency)

   d. After reading a selection, the teacher can instruct pupils to go back and find the sentence that says something. This turns into fun if the teacher is willing to act a little bit silly.

4. Phonics skills can be reinforced and further developed during beginning reading. A variety of ways follow:

   a. Put a story on a transparency or on dittoed sheets for the pupils. Have the pupils underline the most important phonics point or have them draw lines connecting words to indicate correct linkage.

   b. The class usually enjoys playing teacher. Have individuals raise their hands if the pupil reading makes an error. If he corrects it, he is then the next to read.

   c. Although it is generally not wise to let any one pupil read a long passage, it is great motivation to occasionally let pupils read until they make a pronunciation error.

   d. Pupils enjoy hearing themselves read. Play back the tape recording and ask the pupil to identify and correct his own errors.

5. Reading instruction should rarely exceed ten or fifteen minutes daily and should be a pleasurable experience for the young pupil. Today there are materials available that should be pleasant even for the pupil who doesn't like to read in any language. Several well-known old stories have been written in easy Spanish, are colorfully illustrated and sometimes are accompanied by filmstrips and records. Even the "sophisticated" junior high pupil enjoys reading LOS TRES OSOS in Spanish. Simple plays also help the beginning reader and are fun for him to perform. Experience stories, as used in many primary classrooms, can also build upon the audio-lingual skills of Spanish pupils and aid beginning reading. The pupils dictate sentences which the teacher writes on the blackboard or overhead projector. Pupils later read the story they created.

As the pupil gradually develops reading skill and confidence, writing can be started. To prevent discouragement and to build confidence in his new skills, beginning writing exercises should be brief and have little margin for error. Most beginning writing exercises require simple manipulation of sentence patterns. By means of this guided writing, the pupil becomes more aware of Spanish sentence structure. He is gradually able to move into more difficult writing. The following types of writing exercises work well with FLES students.

a. Fill in exercises: The pupil is provided with a word list from which to copy his answer. The following examples show how this technique can be adapted to a variety of structures:

(nouns) primavera
verano
otoño
invierno

Agosto es un mes del verano .

Abril es un mes de la primavera .

(phrases) están
estamos
estoy
está
estás

en la casa
en la clase
en el patio

Ana está en la casa .

b. Rewriting: The pupil rewrites a sentence but replaces or changes some element. Generally he will choose and copy an appropriate item from a list. The following examples show how a rewriting exercise can be adapted to a variety of structures.

(adverbs) El hotel está lejos de la plaza.
(frente a) El hotel está frente a la plaza.

(gender) Los niños están en la casa.
Las niñas están en la casa.

(verbs) Mi amigo compra un billete y viaja a California.
(Mis amigos) Mis amigos compran un billete y viajan a California.

c. Matching: In this type of exercise elements are combined to make a sentence. It can be a matter of simply matching and copying as in this example:

Yo	vamos a	jugar
Tú	voy a	viajar
Pablo	va a	estudiar
Ana y yo	van a	hablar
Uds.	vas a	nadar

Yo voy a jugar.

or require the pupil to add some element to the words supplied as in this exercise:

Pablo	el piano	Pablo toca el piano.
María	al tenis	María juega al tenis.

FLES students also enjoy fun writing activities that can reinforce beginning writing skills; unscrambling of words and sentences, mazes, crossword puzzles, games like "Hangman", spelling races, etc. Use them often to keep interest high.

Armed now with phonics skills and confident in beginning reading and writing, the FLES pupil can successfully bridge the gap between audio-lingual beginning work and the more advanced skills taught in junior high and high school. The teacher can be confident that her young FLES students will be the best FLOP students (FLOP, you know, is Foreign Language for Older People).

Speech delivered to Annual Meeting of
The American Association of Teachers
of Spanish and Portuguese --Chicago

December 1971

Alice Mohrman
Seventh Grade Spanish Specialist
Des Plaines Elementary Schools